DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 339 723 TM 017 595

TITLE	The National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning. Proceedings (2nd, Princeton, New Jersey, June 4-7, 1990).
INSTITUTION	National Inst. on the Assessment of Experiential Learning, Trenton, NJ.
SPONS AGENCY	Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, Philadelphia, PA.; Thomas A. Edison State Coll., Trenton, NJ.
PUB DATE	Jun 90
NOTE	42p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Education; College Credits; Critical Thinking; *Educational Assessment; Educational History; Educational Policy; Evaluators; *Experiential Learning; Graduate Study; Higher Education; *Prior Learning; Program Development; *Student Experience

ABSTRACT

This document summarizes discussions held at a conference of the National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning, which is concerned with prior learning assessment (PLA), a process developed for awarding college-level credit for out-of-class experiences. The conference consisted of two tracks, beginning and advanced; this format allowed newcomers to the field of PLA to gain a solid foundation while those who were already involved participated in the advanced track. Topic sessions are summarized, with descriptions of the remarks of speakers and participants. The topics and primary speakers for each session for the general sessions were: (1) "A Philosophical Approach to Prior Learning Assessment" (U. Whitaker); (2) "The Practice of Prior Learning Assessment" (B. G. Sheckley); (3) "The History and Future of Prior Learning Assessment" (M. T. Keeton); and (4) "Prior Learning Assessment and Accreditation: Panel from the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education" (P. H. Mayhew, A. K. Lezberg, and G. Patton). For the beginning track, the topics and primary speakers were: (5) "Identifying Learning" (H. W. Cabell); (6) "Setting Up Policies and Procedures for a Prior Learning Assessment Program" (R. A. Craig); (7) "Selecting and Training Faculty Assessors" (R. A. Craig); and (8) "Documenting, Measuring and Evaluating Learning" (U. Whitaker). The advanced track topics and primary speakers were: (9) "Defining Critical Thinking Outcomes" (M. T. Keeton); (10) "Current Perspectives on Adult and Experiential Learning" (B. G. Sheckley); (11) "Prior Learning Assessment and Sponsored Learning" (U. Whitaker); (12) "The Transcription of Prior Learning Credit" (H. W. Cabell); (13) "Graduate Level Prior Learning Assessment" (U. Whitaker); and (14) "Summary" (M. T. Keeton). (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE

The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: TM

In our judgment, this document is also of interest to the Clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view. HE

ED339723

Proceedings of

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

June 4-7, 1990

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

DEBRA A. DAGAVARIAN

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Sponsored by Thomas Edison State College,
in cooperation with CAEL.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TM017595

Table of Contents

General Topics:

A Philosophical Approach to Prior Learning Assessment

The Practice of Prior Learning Assessment

The History and Future of Prior Learning Assessment

Prior Learning Assessment and Accreditation:
Panel from the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education

Beginning Track:

Identifying Learning

Setting Up Policies and Procedures for a Prior Learning Assessment Program

Selecting and Training Faculty Assessors

Documenting, Measuring and Evaluating Learning

Advanced Track:

Defining Critical Thinking Outcomes

Current Perspectives on Adult and Experiential Learning

Prior Learning Assessment and Sponsored Learning

The Transcription of Prior Learning Credit

Graduate-Level Prior Learning Assessment

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

June 4-7, 1990

© Copyright 1990

Letter from the Institute Director

The second National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning was held in Princeton, New Jersey, in early June, 1990. Responses to the survey distributed on the final day of the Institute indicated that the program met or exceeded the participants' expectations and that they were returning to their home institutions with new energy and an expanded view of the prior learning assessment field.

This year's Institute consisted of two tracks, beginning and advanced. This new format was well received. Newcomers to the PLA field felt that they were provided with a solid foundation to begin or direct a fairly new program. Through the advanced track, participants who have been involved in PLA for several years were provided with a forum for exploring "cutting edge" issues and exchanging ideas. The groups also met jointly on topics of interest to all. Participants felt that attending the Institute gave them the opportunity to meet colleagues they could call upon in the future to discuss ideas and problems. Many were impressed with the ratio of faculty to participant and many commented on the availability of the faculty for individual help and attention.

The third National Institute will be held in Princeton June 9 through 12, 1991. It will combine the best of the first two years as well as additional new research and practices. A perusal of these Proceedings will give you a taste of the richly rewarding National Institute experience. Consider joining us in 1991. You are welcome to call me for additional information.

Dr. Debra A. Dagavarian

Director, The National Institute
on the Assessment of Experiential Learning

A Philosophical Approach to Prior Learning Assessment

For a prior learning assessment program to be successful, prior learning assessment staff must be able to understand and articulate the value of the program to their colleagues, administrators, faculty and potential students. Perhaps more important, they must be aware of what others perceive to be the problems with PLA and be able to address them.

To assist Institute participants in being able to articulate their position and defend the critic of PLA if necessary, Dr. Urban Whitaker led the group in a discussion of the what are commonly considered to be criticisms of PLA. He then discussed the positive factors which can be used to refute the criticism. Conference participants were surveyed by Dr. Whitaker prior to the Institute so that their particular concerns, or successes, could be included in the session.

Why is it that some people are opposed to the PLA process? The criticism of PLA falls into several categories: general complaints, more specific complaints, economic concerns, and academic concerns.

General Complaints:

- -It's a giveaway
- -It's a diploma mill
- -There are no standards
- -It is a devaluation of the academic currency
- -It is of low quality
- -Shortcuts are suspect
- -Reputation will suffer

More specific complaints:

- -"It's not possible to learn anything outside the classroom"
- -"If they didn't learn it from me, they didn't learn it"
- -It will create problems with accreditation or other associations
- -Faculty fear loss of control

-Program discriminates against younger students when it sets an age limit

Economic Concerns:
-It will decrease classroom attendance
-The whole process is too expensive
-It adds to the workload
-We don't have the resources

Academic Concerns
-There is insufficient theory in assessment of experiential learning
-There is no breadth or depth
-Students complain it is too hard
-They don't get enough credit
-Can't get into graduate school with PLA credits
-Problems arise when student transfers

The following lists of positive aspects on PLA were created by the group. Many of these address and refute the negative concerns above.

General Reasons:
+It is part of a college's basic business
+It is fair to students
+It serves the older, wiser learners
+It eliminates duplication
+It adds "verification" as the third legitimate role of higher education (teaching and research are the others)
+It adds to the college's range of services

Secondary Reasons:
+There are economic and marketing benefits
+It is a way to meet the competition
+It is a way for adults to get back into the educational system
+It generates money
+Students can get tuition reimbursement from employers
+It puts the college in a positive light

Academic Advantages:
+It improves the curriculum by forcing us to re-evaluate competency and assessment theory
+It generally improves the curriculum because older people are participating
+It extends the curriculum because students are able to apply for credit in courses not offered at the college
+Accepting PLA credits improves the balance between theory and practice
+It improves the use of prior knowledge and is an excellent preparation for future learning

+It accelerates degree progress
+It helps students meet need for certification or promotion

Although Dr. Whitaker feels that many of the positive facts about PLA help refute the critics, he offered additional advice.

*"We should challenge the people that hit us with generalizations," Dr. Whitaker stated. He pointed out that in making general negative statements about PLA, such as in the previous list (giveaway, diploma mill, no standards) colleagues are guilty of something that their students would not be allowed to do in class. How many times have we asked students to be specific and back up their points with facts?

*We should not accept guilt by association. There are good and bad programs in every field and PLA programs are no exception. Each program should be judged on its own merit.

*Get traditional people involved and they will see the merit and value of PLA. Often they become your best supporters.

*Sometimes fear is really a lack of information. Spend time educating the academic community on the value of PLA.

*"The best argument for PLA is to parade your successful students in front of everybody," Dr. Whitaker advised. Student examples can be used to refute some of the negative statements. For example, if it is felt that students with PLA credits will not be accepted into graduate school, find students who have been accepted and have details of the cases ready when you need them.

Several of the faculty present at this session addressed the question of accreditation. All felt that positive evaluations were possible across the country as long as the PLA programs were of high quality and followed the CAEL guidelines. (Editor's note: More on accreditation was discussed by a panel from the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education at the last session of the Institute. See last section of these proceedings for a summary.) Institute participants were also advised to work to get themselves on accreditation teams and share their knowledge of PLA.

The one negative perception of PLA that Dr. Whitaker found difficult to refute himself was the point about workload. The program requires a good deal of work and it should not be handled by inexperienced staff or as an addition to someone's schedule. "We may have to face the fact that there is a good deal of truth to it," he confided.

Nevertheless, Dr. Whitaker feels that "if it is worth doing, it's worth doing well. We can't allow administrative pressure for profits to cause us to relax our standards."

"We have a magnificent case to support extended programs on prior learning assessment," Dr. Whitaker concluded. I don't think there are any compelling arguments to be made against it." Institute participants agreed that the value of the program to adult students and to higher education in general surely made the program worth the effort.

The Practice of Prior Learning Assessment

During this session Dr. Barry G. Sheckley first reported to the group on the outcomes of two national studies on the practice of PLA. Then the group reflected on what are commonly considered "valid" practices in higher education and how PLA could be included.

According to Dr. Sheckley, research indicates that only a small number of PLA credits are awarded in colleges across the country, despite the fact that many institutions will say that they offer PLA opportunities when surveyed.

In a study conducted to determine the extent that Servicemen's Opportunity College (SOC) member institutions use portfolio assessment and challenge examinations, 1,500 randomly selected SOC institutions were surveyed. The results indicated that only 10 percent of the colleges which have portfolio and challenge exam programs actually awarded credit through the program. The study also found that institutions are reluctant to accept portfolio and challenge exam credits in transfer. Fifty-three percent never accept portfolio credits in transfer and forty-one percent never accept challenge examinations.

A national survey was conducted by Lou Swiczewicz, a Ph. D. candidate at the University of Connecticut, and a National Institute participant, to determine the segmentation and penetration of PLA within higher education in the United States. In a survey mailed to a stratified random sample of 500 postsecondary institutions, Swiczewicz learned that nationally standardized examinations were the most preferred method of PLA and that portfolio assessment was the least used method. Over 90 percent of the respondents used nationally standardized examinations to award credit; yet only 47 percent would award credit through portfolio assessment. Guide recommendations were recognized by 70.6 percent of the respondents and departmental challenge or end-of-course examinations were recognized by 78.7 percent.

"If you talk to colleagues in higher education, what would they consider to be valid practices? What would they

feel higher education should be doing?" Dr. Sheckley asked the group. The following list reflects what participants thought colleagues would consider to be valid higher educational practices today:

*Teaching.
*Research.
*Verification.
*Preparing people to have rewarding and productive lives.
*Forming a well-rounded and liberally educated person.
*Making students aware of other perspectives.
*Helping students to relate to others and participate in a democracy.
*Teaching people to learn outside the classroom.
*Providing opportunities for a population that historically has not had access to college.
*Teaching students to become lifelong learners.

In order for the practice of PLA to be accepted and used by more colleges across the country, Dr. Sheckley feels that it is important to make PLA "face-valid" within institutions. PLA must fit in with the overall academic program of the college. To make the PLA program more face-valid, the following list of suggestions was offered:

*Demonstrate that the portfolio evaluation is the most comprehensive challenge examination that exists.
*Communicate portfolio evaluation outcomes in terms with which the faculty is familiar. Stay within the culture of academia.
*Establish a portfolio advisory committee consisting of faculty members.
*Publicize marketing statistics internally and externally; share the value of the program through success stories.
*Perform good assessments.

The History and Future of Prior Learning Assessment

At an evening session, Dr. Morris T. Keeton reflected on the history of PLA and shared his views on its future. Dr. Keeton created much of the history himself, having served as chief executive officer of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning from 1977 through 1989. He served as Chair of the Steering Committee of the original CAEL when it was a project of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the mid-1970s.

The first traces of the assessment of experiential learning began as early as 1900 when the College Entrance Examination Board was established and began developing tests of aptitude for, and later of achievement in, college studies. In 1942 the G.E.D. examinations (high school equivalency) were developed in response to the needs of people in the military.

However it wasn't until the decade of the sixties and the early seventies that there was a tremendous explosion of programs for adults. In the early sixties colleges began offering degree programs especially for adults and providing PLA as one of the program options. Between 1968 and 1974, some thirteen colleges were created with adult learners as the primary clientele. Colleges experienced an enormous expansion of enrollments during this time.

The British Open University began in 1971. From 1971 through 1973, the Commission on Non-Traditional Study convened and presented recommendations. Shortly after, in 1974, The Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning (CAEL I) Project of the Educational Testing Service was formed.

During the period of 1974 through 1977 CAEL published 54 publications on PLA and presented model programs and validation studies. Dr. Keeton estimated that "tens of thousands of days were spent in training faculty in the late seventies." There was a growing acceptance of PLA in the late seventies and by 1979 the American Council on Education (ACE), the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) endorsed PLA with the

understanding that it would be conducted according to CAEL's principles of good practice.

By the eighties, over 500 colleges and universites were recognizing prior learning assessment. G.E.D. reported that it had awarded 500,203 high school equivalency diplomas, representing 13 percent of that year's total high school diplomas and equivalencies. In 1981, the National League for Nursing began recognizing the B. S. in Nursing bachelors program of the Regents of the University of the State of New York.

In 1982 CAEL changed its name to the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning and, using the experience it had acquired in its first decade of operation, began producing an advanced set of standards and technical manuals. It is predicted that the number of PLA programs will grow as colleges work more diligently to serve the adult learner. Urban Whitaker's book, "Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles, and Procedures" was published in 1989 and is recognized across the country as the standard-setting book in the PLA field today.

Prior Learning Assessment and Accreditation:
Panel from the Commission
on Institutions of Higher Education

The notion that awarding credits for prior learning assessment may be looked upon unfavorably by accrediting bodies was completely discounted during the panel discussion on Prior Learning Assessment and Accreditation. To the contrary, panelists praised the practice of PLA conducted under the proper guidelines. All three panelists viewed PLA as a vital practice which is especially relevant given the growing adult student population today.

Participating in the panel were: Dr. Paula Hooper Mayhew, Middle State Association, chair; Dr. Amy K. Lezberg, New England Association; and Dr. Gerald Patton, North Central Association. All three panelists acknowledged that the number of PLA programs in colleges and universities across the country was growing at a tremendous rate.

The panelists discussed existing standards for the awarding of PLA credits by their accrediting bodies and explained the underlying assumptions that guide accreditors who are evaluating PLA programs. Dr. Mayhew pointed out that during an accreditation visit all regional accrediting bodies ask four common questions:

*What are the individual college's mission and goals and how are they measured?
*Are the resources available to implement the goals?
*Is the college doing what it says it is doing? (The college's self-study report is used to answer this question.)
*Can the college continue to meet its goals in the future?

Dr. Mayhew advised PLA administrators to be sure that PLA is connected to the mission and goals of the institution even if it means revising the goals.

Dr. Lezberg emphasized to PLA administrators the importance of making sure that what is being done in PLA gets into the college's self-study. She noted that beginning next year, evaluation teams will be looking to see if PLA is

offered at every college undergoing re-accreditation. Teams in her region also look for a loop of effectiveness, which can be demonstrated through follow-up studies. Dr. Lezberg, who was a returning adult student herself, stated that in many colleges "faculty have to be brought from their traditional views to prior learning assessment."

"Get yourself on accrediting teams," Dr. Lezberg recommended to the Institute participants. This is an excellent way to help support the practice of PLA by sharing your expertise on the subject with other team members.

Dr. Patton emphasized strongly that faculty at the home institution (not external faculty) should be involved in the PLA program. He recommended Urban Whitaker's book, "Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles and Procedures," to colleges interested in setting up a PLA program. Dr. Patton also recommended that PLA directors get placed on evaluation teams. Submitting articles on PLA programs to national publications to demonstrate the impact of nontraditional programs was also suggested. In the next year, Dr. Patton expects to get data on the number of institutions in his region who are engaged in PLA.

In preparing for an accreditation team to visit their campus, Dr. Mayhew advised PLA staff to "imagine what a harried stranger of good will is going to need from you." She told the group to be realistic about how much the team will understand PLA. If the PLA program plays a big part in the overall campus offerings, there may be one team member with PLA expertise, but often that is not the case. Consequently, it is the job of the PLA director to communicate the value of the program and how it works. For example, Dr. Mayhew offered, "A question most often asked is 'How do the students get the credit' or 'How do you award the credit? Answering: 'Portfolio Assessment' is not good enough. It is up to the PLA staff to demystify the process." She suggested that to understand PLA at its simplest is to understand "course equivalence."

Dr. Mayhew also recommended that PLA staff be aware of the view that others on campus have of their program. Often an accreditation team will hear negative comments from faculty or other staff. To minimize internal negative publicity, PLA staff need to continually explain their program to colleagues and help them understand the benefits of PLA to the overall college community.

Beginning Track:

Identifying Learning

Identifying college-level learning is the single most important ingredient for the successful evaluation of a learning experience--and probably the most difficult--according to Dr. Harriet W. Cabell. A good way to start is to have the student reflect on his or her life and think of a significant learning activity. For example: What did I learn from my work? What did I learn from my hobbies? How can I demonstrate what I know? What understanding do I have of the subject? What skills are transferable? How can I broaden my perspective on the learning?

"In portfolio development we are saying to the student that what they have done is worth something in your academic life as well as your personal and professional life. If colleges are serious about providing meaningful education, they have got to recognize that finding out where the person is and building on that is one of the key principles of education," Dr. Cabell stated.

A portfolio process allows students to think about their experiences and to look at the principles and beliefs underlying these experiences. Most adults have a pattern for the way they approach learning, and understanding that pattern will help them discover how they process information.

The Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) designed by David Kolb is often administered to students to help them understand their learning styles. A review of significant learning opportunities from their work, education, volunteer and recreational activities, military experience, licenses and awards received and publications helps them reflect on the time spent in these activities, what the activities involved, learning outcomes and competencies reached, and ways that the learning could be documented.

Dr. Cabell noted that it is the learning for which the student is awarded the credit, not the experience. For example, a person who has been involved in fundraising for many years may have learned very little about the theory of fundraising. After interviewing the person, it may be that he or she went door-to-door to collect money for causes. Yet another person could have planned many special events, read a great deal on the subject, attended workshops, ran

meetings, organized volunteers. Two people who seem to have the same "experience" could have quite a different amount of "college-level knowledge."

Dr. Cabell sees the portfolio process as helping people to develop skills to be more effective, because in compiling a portfolio students need to identify their beliefs and principles and ask the question: What difference does what I learned make? Many adult students who are compiling a portfolio need to learn the skill of "reflecting" on their experiences and learning from them. Dr. Cabell believes that sometimes people see education as something completely separate from their lives. Developing a portfolio, however, forces them to use their experiences and reflect on their lives. Additional benefits of the portfolio process are that students learn to transfer principles from one situation to another. They also broaden their perspective of themselves.

Often adult students who are returning to college to have their prior learning evaluated bring with them a great deal of documentation. Part of the job of the PLA staff is to help them organize it in a way that will be most meaningful. In Dr. Cabell's experience, she has found that on the average, students enter her program with three to five transcripts of other college experiences. A common problem is duplication, and staff must be alert to the possibility that college credit cannot be awarded twice for the same learning.

Staff should also be checking to see that the knowledge is current. Although some course content changes very little over the years (History or Literature, for example), knowledge in subjects such as computers, science, or economics could change drastically within a few years; adults attempting portfolios in these areas may lack current knowledge if their experience with the subject occurred several years earlier.

Any attempt for credit through PLA should be part of an overall learning program for the adult student and the credit should be applicable. A portfolio can be used to round out the student's knowledge of a subject and often that can be done through a Directed Study or Independent Study course. For example, someone may have the experience of working in a soup kitchen, but that alone would not qualify that individual for college credit. If he or she used that experience as the basis for studying in the human services area, perhaps the experience could become part of the learning.

In addition to portfolios, colleges are also faced with how to handle other prior learning assessment credentials, such as examination reports or guide recommendations, like those from the American Council on Education (ACE). Dr.

Cabell believes that there should be a consistency among colleges on how these credits are accepted to avoid students from "shopping around for the best deal." She sees the credits earned for examination (such as the CLEP Program) as slightly different than portfolio because it is credit awarded only for knowledge already learned. In compiling a portfolio there is always some new learning involved.

Individual colleges vary as to how they use the ACE Guide to award credit. The American Council on Education has reviewed educational programs conducted outside the collegiate sector and makes a recommendation as to how many college credits should be awarded. However, it is up to each college to create a policy on how it will use the ACE recommendations. Some colleges follow the ACE recommendations totally, and a student will be awarded the credit recommended by ACE upon receipt of the necessary course documentation. Other colleges use the recomendations in an advisory way but require additional work from the student.

Setting Up Policies and Procedures for a Prior Learning Assessment Program

A small group setting to discuss this topic provided individuals with the opportunity to discuss their institutions in-depth and what problems they were having or anticipated having in setting up a PLA program. To begin the session on setting up policies and procedures for a PLA program, Dr. Ross Ann Craig had the group think about the dynamics of their institution, especially in terms of the people. "I have seen excellent ideas die because they aren't in the arena at the right time or aren't proposed by the right person." Dr. Craig stated. Whether participants were getting ready to propose PLA at their institution or they had a program but needed more support, Dr. Craig asked them to think about who controls the institutional climate, who influences it, who validates it.

Who will oppose you? Who will support you? Who will remain neutral? Who do you need as an advocate that you do not have? What kinds of evidence do people need to experience to become advocates? Dr. Craig pointed out that many people remain neutral because they do not have enough information. Others in the group suggested that there are people in any organization who are "committed to remaining neutral." Nevertheless, a PLA program needs as much support from the different factions on campus as possible.

To further examine the dynamics of their campuses, participants were given the opportunity to think about the following characteristics and then discuss them in pairs, paying attention to which characteristics are difficult to explain and understand. Then they were asked to consider how the characteristics promote the idea of PLA or detract from it.

Characteristics of College Services:
Mission
Image in the community
View of innovation
Strengths
Weaknesses
Present challenges for help, survival

During the discussion, several commonalities were evident:

*Some colleges identified a lack of willingness by others to make changes; others thought that their colleges responded too quickly to new programs without first giving the ideas enough thought.

*Many thought that faculty views of traditional education would make change difficult.

*Participants had varying definitions of "continuing education" and saw the language differential causing confusion.

*Participants recognized that groups within an institution would operate based on their own agenda; for example, the business administrator would see the potential for making money and the faculty chair would identify academic integrity issues.

*For many, the job ahead was to change colleagues' perception of reality and broaden their scope on what is possible.

*All groups identified the scarcity of resources as a problem in a time of cutbacks and tight budget controls.

*Some felt their missions needed to be "dusted off" to reflect changing times.

In summary, the following questions were raised in relation to each institution.

Is PLA compatible with the mission statement as it now exists at your institution? Dr. Craig believes that it is critical that PLA be included in the mission statement in order to get the support and respect of internal and external publics that will be needed to get the job done.

What are the current survival issues at your institution? Garnering support for a program that people see as a risk, or having new money allocated is very difficult.

What is the view of change? What is tolerable change for you and your staff? What is exciting?

How do the strengths work for what you are doing? How do the weaknesses work for what you are doing? How do the

strengths work against what you are doing? How do the weaknesses work against what you are doing?

"When you are working with anything that is controversial or different, who proposes the change becomes very important," Dr. Craig pointed out. Who is the best person to suggest the change? If the PLA Director is a newcomer, he or she may not be the best person. Who has the power to present this idea? Who knows and is respected by the people who will decide?

When proposing a PLA program, the Director must determine what groups discuss a change of this nature and give them as much knowledge as possible. It is up to the PLA administrators to get information to people ahead of the discussion and build their knowledge base. There may be formal (such as the Faculty Senate) and informal opportunities (such as in the faculty lounge) to share information. "Everybody in the institution has influence and access to information," Dr. Craig believes, "It is important to recognize that there are style diffentials operating and that the informal communications are just as important as the formal."

Once the program is approved, a great deal of systems need to be set up for running the program efficiently. This is true whether two or twenty people are involved in the implementation. Policies need to be developed and kept on record. The process must be streamlined and efficient and the office must be ready to handle the volume as it develops.

Dr. Craig pointed out that working with adults is very labor intensive because many prefer to be handled individually. This is very time-consuming, especially if staff are repeating a great deal of the basic program information again and again. The group discussed the positive and negative aspects of running workshops or information sessions where groups of adults interested in PLA could attend. Experiences with workshops varied among Institute participants. Of colleges which offer them, some are very successful, while others are poorly attended. Many agreed that since each adult's experiences are different, in a group setting many times the leader ends up working one-on-one anyway.

Selecting and Training Faculty Assessors

Faculty assessors are at the heart of every PLA program and selecting and training them is an ongoing process that is critical to the program's success. During Dr. Ross Ann Craig's session, Institute participants developed a profile of the faculty assessor who could successfully accomplish prior learning assessment.

The group created a list of seventeen characteristics and then decided on the six most important. They were:

*knowledge of college degree requirements
*knowledge of subject area
*objectivity
*diagnostic skills
*good skills in analysis
*appreciation of various learning styles

Dr. Craig added the following characteristics which are commonly mentioned by other groups during similar discussions.

*devotion to learning
*ability to meet deadlines
*patience
*ability to follow directions
*influence with colleagues
*consistency
*adherence to standards
*good judgement
*objectivity
*skill in relating to students
*excellent background in subject area
*excellent reputation among colleagues

The selection of the first group of assessor is very important because many times the reputation of the entire program depends upon the first faculty who get involved. It is important to include the opinion of faculty when selecting assessors. Early in the program, directors must work to dispel the myth that "the assessment people are giving away credits" or are "picking faculty that will do what the assessment people want."

Why is it so difficult to get and keep an assessor? How do PLA directors attract quality faculty assessors to the program? According to Dr. Craig, the first step is to decide

what you want in an assessor. Then, directors should spread the word and develop a system to find those individuals. Faculty may be willing to work with assessment but could run into resistance from deans. It is important to remind everyone of the institutional commitment to the program.

It is up to the PLA director to encourage "model" assessors to participate, and to find ways to make the program appeal to them. "People get involved for a reason; they need to see the rewards," Dr. Craig confided. What rewards are possible will depend on how committed the institution is to the program. Some faculty might be given time off from other duties; others will view the opportunity to work with a different population as rewarding. Awards, recognition days and other "ego-builders" can be built into the program with little or no cost. Research opportunities might also attract faculty.

Training of faculty should be an ongoing process, although Dr. Craig recognizes that it will be much more time-consuming for the assessor initially. She advises PLA administrators to get assessors together in groups and have the more experienced assessors participate in the training. "People need guidelines, written procedures and instructions," Dr. Craig pointed out. She warned that if the training is disorganized or weak, faculty will be confused and lose interest in the program. They will also spread the word to other faculty who will not be inclined to get involved in the future.

Assessors need to be exposed to the literature of adult education. That can be done on an ongoing basis through regular handouts or a newsletter or when the group is together for training. Dr. Craig believes that having part of the training workshop include information on adult education and theory is important, because faculty may not have the time or interest to pursue it on their own.

Identifying influential people in the institution who are committed to PLA and having them participate in the training is also important. A welcome from the provost, or lunch with the president is ideal.

When training assessors, Dr. Craig emphasized the need for PLA directors to understand what methods of training have worked at their institution and be sure that modes of delivery are based on those methods and the individual institutional environment. Learning materials should vary and can include handouts, video, discussion, role-playing and case studies. If procedures are not discussed in detail and made clear, the program and the student will suffer. Standard conditions should be stressed with the understanding that exceptions will occur. "With role-playing, you can model what you want to happen. It gives

faculty a chance to test themselves and gives the chance for last-minute reinforcement." Dr. Craig pointed out.

Who should do the training? Although Dr. Craig believes that PLA directors need to be visible during the training, she prefers using outside experts with good teaching skills. Identifying institutional advocates and using them in some visible way during the training was also advised. Advocates with good reputations on campus can lend credibility to a new program. Finally, Dr. Craig stressed the importance of having the training evaluated and keeping the lines of communication open for ongoing feedback.

Documenting, Measuring and Evaluating Learning

During Dr. Urban Whitaker's session on documenting, measuring and evaluating learning, the group began to compile a list of the specific assessment problems they face at their home institutions. To start them thinking about some of the issues, Dr. Whitaker told the group about an actual experience he had several years ago with a student he called "Ken."

Ken came to visit Dr. Whitaker and was quite angry with the institution. Five years ago he had dropped out with only 13 units remaining to complete his degree. At the time Ken left college he was tired of all the theory courses and wanted to get into some active learning.

Ken joined VISTA and spent five years with Indians off the coast of Maine. During his stay in Maine he was active in a wide variety of learning activities while helping the Indians. He helped them get a bill passed in the legislature; he started a community newspaper to help them communicate among themselves; he started a nutrition program; he raised funds; and in many other ways helped to build a sense of community among the Indians.

Ken returned to college at a time when men in the service were being awarded up to 15 units for time spent in the Armed Forces. Ken felt that he had spent a great deal more time in VISTA than the servicemen who were receiving automatic credit and that he should get the 13 units he needed to complete his degree. The Registrar, a former serviceman, declined to give Ken any credit for his experiences.

Using this case study, Dr. Whitaker ask the group to discuss Ken's case and decide what to do about it. From the discussion, a list of assessment problems was compiled for later discussion.

Among the strategies discussed by the group were:

*Try to use the military credit policy as a precedent and draw parallels to Ken's situation.

*Ask the student to write a detailed autobiographical sketch of what he has done in the last five years. Look at the sketch to see what possible course equivalents Ken might

have, for example, organizational skills, journalism, sociology, internships.

*Seek advice of colleagues and advocates of PLA.

*Begin lobbying, especially with department chairs appropriate to Ken's new areas of knowledge.

*Have Ken obtain letters of support from people who know of his experiences firsthand.

*Try the independent study route and have Ken reflect, update, and analyze his experiences.

*Have him write a proposal and request to meet with the faculty to discuss it.

*Explore whether any challenge examinations exist in Ken's areas of expertise.

*Enlist the support of the Chair of the Anthropology Department. (Ken's major was Anthropology.)

*Get Ken's documentation and check its validity.

From this list of suggestions, a list of assessment problems was formulated. Then the group discussed the problems they found especially difficult to overcome. Fifteen assessment problems were identified:

*How to distinguish between experience and learning.

*How to determine what is relevant learning; what will count towards the degree.

*Determining college-level breadth and depth.

*Finding the appropriate person to do the assessment

*Finding comparable courses to the experience.

*How to put the proper safeguards into retroactive internships.

*Balancing theory and practice.

*The political problems--gaining acceptance for the whole procedure.

*Timing (identifying completion dates and turnaround times).

*Using challenge examinations.

*How to get documentation.

*Determining how much credit should be awarded.

*Cost factors.

*Training.

*Duplication.

Cost was a problem identified by many in the group. At some colleges, costs were minimized bacause the work was assigned as an overload to current staff. Others transferred the cost to students by charging them for workshops and other services. Dr. Whitaker advised the group to follow the CAEL guidelines related to cost and to charge the student for credits assessed--not for credits granted. "It is appropriate to charge for the work you do, not for the amount of credits the students end up getting." He explained, "It is easy to yield to temptation and financial pressures otherwise." Accreditation teams have definite opinions of how costs are handled in PLA programs, and Dr. Whitaker advised participants to check with them when in doubt of their policy structure.

Most of the participants agreed that what faculty were paid for assessing portfolios was very low. One way to keep faculty interested was to try and reduce the time they need to be involved by being organized and not having them get involved in non-academic details of the assessment. Other rewards, or "ego-builders" should be used to attract and keep good faculty involved.

The group was also concerned with how to determine the amount of credit a student's knowledge is worth. More and more colleges are beginning to use "double experts" and CAEL recommends it highly. One faculty member is the subject matter specialist; the other person evaluates what the learning is equivalent to in credits.

The question of block credits, or undistributed units, was also raised as an issue. When colleges award blocks of credits, it is sometimes difficult for the student to use these credits in transfer or for graduate school acceptance. Block credits also may create questions regarding duplication of credit. It will be harder to determine duplication if PLA credits are not transcripted on a course by course basis.

Some participants found it difficult to ascertain the authenticity of the documentation. This can be especially difficult at times. For this reason, primary and secondary documentation generally should be included in a portfolio.

Procedures should be in place to check the documentation, whether that means additional telephone calls by a staff member, or looking through files. Faculty assessors should always have the option of asking for more evidence, meeting with the student for a personal interview, or requiring additional testing.

Advanced Track:

Defining Critical Thinking Outcomes

Critical thinking is not a single, simple ability and any attempt to define it usually raises questions on the level and range of skills involved. During the session on critical thinking, Dr. Morris T. Keeton questioned whether or not there is agreement among colleges on a definition of critical thinking, despite the fact that many of them are exploring how to develop the critical thinking skills of their students. Today, much of the reform literature on higher education states that colleges should play a role in enhancing students' critical thinking skills and abilities.

During this session, the group attempted to identify some of the issues surrounding critical thinking that have specific relevance to the practice of PLA. Traditional colleges are beginning to place more importance on the need to identify the skills of entering students. In fact, some colleges are creating extensive skill listings to get a profile of the entering student. Yet in most PLA programs students may attempt a portfolio without any prior screening of their skills. This practice was questioned by Institute participants, who felt that the skills needed to do PLA were quite advanced. Should students be at a specifc critical thinking level to be permitted to start a portfolio? How would that level be defined or measured?

The group felt that many PLA programs assumed students had a certain level of critical analysis ability coming into the program. Critical thinking is applied within the college experience in many areas: admissions, portfolio, test-taking, and coursework, to name a few. Within portfolio assessment specifically, students need the ability to "articulate" what they have learned and "prove" that it is college-level. They are practicing "valid reasoning" while compiling the portfolio.

Dr. Keeton expressed concern that working on a portfolio required a very sophisticated level of critical thinking and yet he feels that some students do not have the skill at even a basic level. He feels that one of the most difficult skills for college students is defining a problem in terms that make it solvable. Problem solving is a component of critical thinking. He also pointed out that there are people who have the ability to think critically in one area and not in another.

Dr. Keeton feels that some of the most critical thinking skills include discerning the assumptions of others and being able to distinguish among ideas and unscramble deadlocks. In successful argumentation, the critical thinker will be able to follow the other person's assumptions and refute the person based on those assumptions.

Can critical thinking be learned? Dr. Keeton believes that it can be. This discussion on critical thinking, an issue hotly debated in the higher education community, helped Institute participants start thinking, if they had not already done so, about how critical thinking fits into the practice of PLA.

Current Perspectives on Adult and Experiential Learning

Adult learning involves a developmental process, but also follows tumultuous, oscillating and turbulent paths. During this session on current perspectives on adult and experiential learning, Dr. Barry G. Sheckley integrated these two themes of adult learning research with current experiential modes. By better understanding the complexity of how adults learn, Dr. Sheckley feels that adult education administrators (and, in fact, all educational administrators) can begin to construct better learning environments.

"What the learner does in the learning process is more important than what the teacher does," Dr. Sheckley feels. In teacher education today there is a heavy emphasis on platform skills, lesson plans and teacher behavior. Yet what the learner does in the learning process to have effective learning happen is often ignored. Dr. Sheckley disagrees with this emphasis on the teacher. "An effective teacher of adults is much more of a manager. There should be an understanding of what the learning process is, and then the role of teacher is to manage that process." he believes. What should teachers be doing to effectively manage the learning process of their students?

Understanding learning as a developmental process is the first step, according to Dr. Sheckley. Each student's behavior is determined by his or her individual characteristics, environment and prior behaviors. Adult learning builds on existing knowledge to develop more complex skills and perspectives, and expanding current perspectives requires movement across a "zone of learning" as Dr. Sheckley described it. He continued: "movement across the zone of learning requires challenges, supports and motivating visions." A teacher who understands this complex learning process and is trying to expand a student's perspectives, ideas and skills will help provide the challenges, support, and vision needed.

Challenge is important in the learning environment and teachers can provide the push when needed. "This is where you are; this is where you want to go..." The support of a teacher can get the student from the challenge to the motivating vision. Telling adult students how you will support them and what services are available for support is

very important according to Dr. Sheckley. Designing a learning environment in a way that promotes challenges, support services and motivating visions is crucial. Dr. Sheckley pointed out that "during the learning process confusion and tumult are going to happen and that is acceptable as long as the student stays on the developmental path and has support." Teachers may play a role in the motivating vision aspect of learning by reminding students of what good will happen as a result of reaching their educational goal. Visualizing the rewards can keep a student motivated.

"According to experiential learning theory," Dr. Sheckley explained, "information is grasped either through direct concrete experience, such as running a computer program, or through abstract concepts, such as reading a manual which explains how to run a computer program. Once grasped, this information is transformed (personalized) either by thinking about it or by using it in some way. The grasping-transforming processes form a cycle which provides an excellent model for designing adult learning programs."

He continued, "in the real world, the learning cycle does not operate as a smooth process. All experiences are not transformed into general concepts and all concepts are not analyzed. Individuals function as selective information processors and ideas which confirm personal ideas and beliefs are easily grasped. Viewpoints that do not confirm personal ideas are resisted. For adults to learn new information, it must be linked with personal ideas, experiences, values and constructs. Adults must also be allowed to think about information and experiment with it in pragmatic ways."

In the experiential learning cycle there are four learning environments:

Valuing Environment: In the valuing environment the question "why" is predominant, there is a sensitivity to feelings and values, listening with an open mind is encouraged, ambiquity is created, brainstorming skills are required, and the focus is on gathering information.

Thinking Environment: The question is "what", information is organized, conceptual models are built, theories and ideas are tested, quantitative information is analyzed, and problem-solving and critical analysis skills are required.

Deciding Environment: The questions are "when" and "where," new ways of applying concepts and theories are created, new ideas are experimented with, solutions are chosen, and analysis and decision-making skills are required.

Acting Environment: The question is "how," opportunities are sought out and exploited, commitment to objectives is required, and implementation and acting skills are also required.

Dr. Sheckley believes that educators should develop a learning environment that uses the full learning cycle. He sees that some institutions concentrate on the thinking environment and spend less time with value and action. The business community spends more time in the acting and deciding environments and less of valuing and thinking.

Dr. Sheckley believes that the practice of prior learning assessment fits beautifully into designing a full learning environment because it complements the usual academic setting. In academia, a thinking environment usually predominates. PLA presents the opportunity for acting, valuing and thinking.

Prior Learning Assessment and Sponsored Learning

Dr. Urban Whitaker feels that prior learning assessment as it is practiced today is often isolated from the planning of future learning and that so-called "sponsored experiential learning" programs such as internships and cooperative education rarely build on the advantages of PLA.

In preparation for this session the group had been asked to read an essay on Malcolm Knowles' vision of a perfect educational future. In the session they shared their ideas of an ideal learning future that would maximize the reciprocal advantages of PLA and sponsored learning activities. The two ideas expanded upon during the session were (1) that PLA should be looked at as a basic, essential step for all future learning, and (2) that we as individuals are primary actors in determining what the world will be like in the 21st century.

In Knowles' 21st century educational system there would be a shift from schools, colleges and universities to what he called Lifelong Learning Resource Centers. Teachers would be viewed more as learning facilitators and campuses would be replaced by satellite centers. The purpose of the centers would be to assess an individual's ability, diagnose his or her need, and develop a learning plan based on the need and ability. The plan would include objectives, activities, resources and an evaluation plan.

What can we do to hasten our vision of education in the 21st century? The group created the following list of activities that each of us could engage in to help create a positive educational model for the future.

*Promote competency-based education.

*Use advances in technology to make education more accessible to a greater number of people.

*Build bridges between the two camps (traditionalists and nontraditionalists); find common ground.

*See ourselves as change agents; seek out colleagues, build allies and start support groups.

*Lobby wherever and whenever possible: at school board meetings, in social settings and with politicians.

*Prepare a political vision and be ready to fill the vacuum when the current educational system fails.

*Translate ideas for the popular media; for example, write about success stories.

*Support the principle that learning how to learn should be one of the objectives of a general education curriculum.

Dr. Whitaker applauded the efforts of the group and shared his list:

*Work with individual students.

*Influence colleagues, family, friends, neighbors.

*Persuade legislators, administrators, the public.

*Strike.

*Write, speak.

*Become administrators and legislators.

*Present motions to the Academic Senate (within a faculty context).

*Start new organizations.

*Influence existing organizations.

The Transcription of Prior Learning Credit

A primary goal of the transcription of prior learning experience is to produce a reliable record of the student's experience. An informal survey among the Institute participants indicated that colleges transcripted PLA credits in several different ways, among them:

*A course-based translation, whereby a comparable course is selected and that course code is transcripted.

*A special code, with a footnote indicating that the credit was earned by portfolio assessment.

*An indication that this was a "special assessment."

Dr. Harriet W. Cabell believes that reliable and accurate transcription is essential. "To be a useful record, a transcript must include an appropriate description of the work included and a content level designation." She pointed out that most of the time, PLA credit is designated "pass" or "fail" and when that occurs on a transcript it can cause problems.

Often students aspire to go on to graduate school or sit for a professional certificate and are challenged by administrators because of what they view as inadequate transcription of PLA credits or too many "pass" grades on their transcript. Also, some companies tie tuition reimbursement to grades, which may cause problems depending upon how the company reads the PLA credits.

Dr. Cabell believes that a key role of the PLA director and staff is that of advocate for the student. Usually the decision to accept or not accept PLA credits rests with one or two people. By providing additional information and background, the student may benefit. Often PLA advocates will encounter such comments as "I'd love to accept this but it just wouldn't work here" or "We tried this and it didn't work." Persistence and providing good information often prevail.

Cooperation among colleagues reviewing PLA credits could make the review, acceptance and transcription of credits more efficient, more consistent among colleges and less time-consuming for individual colleges. During the

group discussion, several examples were cited whereby colleges spent an extensive amount of time reviewing portfolios of a specific field. "Given the limited resources most of us have, there is no need for us to reinvent the wheel. In the paralegal field, for example, colleges have spent many hours reviewing the curricula. Other colleges could benefit from that time and experience. We need more cooperative ventures," Dr. Cabell concluded. The group went on to discuss the idea of a national credit bank or a "Directory of Colleagues" that everyone could contribute to and use.

Graduate Level Prior Learning Assessment

During this session, Dr. Urban Whitaker outlined the conditions that exist today in graduate level prior learning assessment and then challenged the group to write a policy regarding graduate level PLA for their home institution. Dr. Whitaker believes that the graduate level of higher education is where PLA is most needed, yet it is where there is the least willingness to accept PLA credit. He cited a survey which indicated that under 3 percent of all graduate schools surveyed would give credit for prior learning.

Dr. Whitaker feels that the rationale used by some graduate schools to explain why PLA credits are unacceptable is very elusive. Some will cite their concern in terms of quality control issues. Others appear to resist prior learning assessment for reasons of greed or vanity, as if to imply "if it was not learned here, we will not accept it."

"College policy should be based on the premise that there are a set of competencies to meet degree requirements." Dr. Whitaker feels. He pointed out that in some cases, if the student already has the set of competencies, additional competencies are added to his or her degree requirements. He added degree requirements should be defined with competency-based descriptions. "Graduate schools are concerned with the 'newness' of what was learned and will not accept the idea that research done prior to tenure at the college can be acceptable to meet degree requirements.

In directing the group to create a model policy for graduate level PLA, Dr. Whitaker required that the policy have the following elements:

*A statement of yes or no regarding acceptance of PLA credit and a brief rationale
*An explanation of any limits to the policy, for example, only within certain departments or fields
*A position on the acceptance of transfer credits
*A competency-based premise
*An explanation of how internships, sponsored or unsponsored, will be viewed
*A procedure for handling exceptions to the above policies

When the groups reconvened, they all agreed to accept PLA credits in their model policy, yet there was a variation

on the number of credits they would allow through this method. (Editor's note: This is not surprising since the group represented colleges where the number of undergraduate credits accepted through PLA also varied considerably.) Transfer credits were also acceptable to all the groups and the number of credits in this case also varied.

The groups generally agreed that a competency-based description of the requirements for meeting a specific degree was a good idea; however, some in the group felt that even a definition of "competency-based" could be semantically and conceptually ambiguous. One group's model suggested that each graduate student undergo an initial assessment of his or her knowledge, that the student correct any deficiencies found, that the student plan for completing degree requirements yet to be learned, and that the student conduct research.

The group disagreed on whether the research to be used in meeting degree requirements had to begin after the student's enrollment. Some of the group felt that past research could be applied to the degree and that research by its nature was ongoing and could create lifelong learning opportunities.

Summary

The range of topics at the second National Institute on the Assessment of Experiential Learning, and the depth and diversity of participation from those who attended the Institute, indicate that the practice of prior learning assessment has reached a new stage of sophistication.

Clearly, more colleges are beginning PLA programs each year, and the Institute continues to provide newcomers with a wealth of knowledge, experience--and contacts--to begin their new programs. Just as evident this year was the high quality programming in the advanced track.

In his historical overview of prior learning assessment, Dr. Morris T. Keeton viewed the decade of the sixties and the early seventies as a time of tremendous explosion for adult programs. Since that time, a great deal has been learned, and that "experiential learning" by practioners in the field has elevated PLA research and practice to a new level. This was especially evident during discussions among Institute faculty and students who brought to the forum years of experience on this relatively new educational practice.

These Proceedings were written by Barbara Waters Eklund. Ms. Eklund earned her M. Ed. in Educational Administration, with an emphasis on adult and continuing education, from Rutgers University. She has worked in educational public relations for fifteen years, most recently for eight years as Director of Public Relations and Publications for Thomas Edison State College.

FACULTY OF THE INSTITUTE

Debra A. Dagavarian, Director of the Institute

Dr. Debra A. Dagavarian is the Director of Testing and Assessment at Thomas A. Edison State College. Throughout her fifteen years in higher education as an administrator and faculty member, she has developed a strong commitment to serving the adult learner. Formerly Assistant Dean for Assessment at Empire State College, she also has been Director of Evening Programs and Director of Academic Advising at Mercy College. She holds a Doctorate in Education from Rutgers University. Among Dr. Dagavarian's publications are two books on children's baseball fiction.

Harriet W. Cabell

Dr. Harriet W. Cabell is the Associate Dean and Director of New College/ External Degree Program, the University of Alabama. Speaker, trainer, educator and consultant, she has conducted programs nationwide and abroad for over 60 colleges, universities, and professional organizations. Her training sessions focus on relevant, practical skills and techniques in a variety of areas including the philosophy and implication of prior learning programs, curricular issues and the management of adult learning programs. Dr. Cabell is certified as an Educational Specialist and holds a Doctoral degree from the University of Alabama.

Ross Ann Craig

Dr. Ross Ann Craig is the Vice President for Student Development at Delaware County Community College. She has developed and conducted a variety of workshops in adult development and assertiveness and is a certified trainer in the Student Potential Program of CAEL. She has trained assessors working with students in the U.S. and Great Britain and presented papers to a number of national and local professional groups, including the American Personnel and Guidance Association. Dr. Craig holds a Master's degree in Education from the University of Florida, a Doctoral degree in Education from Nova University and is a licensed psychologist.

Morris T. Keeton

Dr. Morris T. Keeton was chief executive officer of CAEL from 1977 through 1989. He served as Chair of the steering committee of the original CAEL when it was a project of the Educational Testing Service in the mid-1970s. Dr. Keeton was a member of the faculty and administrative staff of Antioch College from 1947-1977, where he served as Professor of Philosophy, College Pastor, Dean of the Faculty, Academic Vice President, Provost and Vice President and Acting President. He holds a B.A. and M.A. in Philosophy from Southern Methodist University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Philosophy from Harvard University. Dr. Keeton also has been listed in Who's Who in America since 1969.

Amy K. Lezberg

Dr. Amy K. Lezberg is Associate Director of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Formerly professor of English and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Sciences, her responsibilities included faculty and curriculum evaluation and development. Presently, she selects and trains evaluation teams for New England's 200 institutions of higher learning. Dr. Lezberg, who holds a Ph.D. in English from Boston University, has presented and published papers on professional ethics, interpersonal/intercultural communication and ethnic literature.

Paula Hooper Mayhew

Dr. Paula Hooper Mayhew is Associate Director of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. A former academic dean at Empire State College, she currently serves the Commission as the assessment and evaluation specialist for four-year colleges and research universities. A graduate of Barnard College, Columbia University, she received her Ph.D. in English Literature from Princeton University, where she completed a dissertation on narrative theory. She is co-author of a study on the women's college in the 1970s and has published articles in the field of women's studies administration and women's literature.

Gerald W. Patton

Dr. Gerald W. Patton is Assistant Director of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Formerly an Assistant Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Director of the African and Afro-American Studies Program at Washington University in St. Louis, he has served as a field reader for the U.S. Office of Education and is a consultant on urban education. Dr. Patton holds a Ph.D. degree in history from the University of Iowa. He is the author of *War and Race: The Black Officer in the American Military 1915-1941*, and editor of *A Framework for Racial Justice, an Agenda for 1980's St. Louis.*

Barry G. Sheckley

Dr. Barry G. Sheckley is Associate Professor at the University of Connecticut at Storrs in the Adult and Vocational Education program. He serves as CAEL Research Associate, has directed four CAEL Institutes and was CAEL's regional manager in New England for ten years. Dr. Sheckley's recent research has been in the area of adult and experiential learning, his current sabbatical research on workplace learning. He received a Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut and conducted dissertation research on adult learning projects. Dr. Sheckley describes himself as an "aging, long-distance marathon runner."

Urban Whitaker

Dr. Urban Whitaker has long been involved in experiential learning and career development. He has served as practitioner, teacher and administrator in cooperative education and other experiential learning programs at San Francisco State University since 1969. He has developed materials in a number of media (print, tape, slide, software) on the learning and assessment of career-transferable skills, and is the author of *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles and Procedures.* He has consulted for numerous colleges and has performed multiple roles for CAEL: author, member of the Board of Directors, Regional Manager, presenter.

Thomas Edison State College
101 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08608-1176
(609) 984-1141

BEST COPY AVAILABLE